

TRUST-WIDE POLICY DOCUMENT

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP STRATEGY

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Version 2

*Striving for perfect care
and a just culture*

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Further information about this document:

Document name	Freedom to Speak Up Strategy (HR06a)
Document summary	This strategy outlines how <i>one person can make a difference</i> when raising concerns about how Mersey Care provides care and delivers its services, encouraging people to <i>speak up</i> , for leaders to <i>listen up</i> and for all parts of the organisation to <i>take up</i> the lessons learnt from concerns raised - as part of our <i>just and learning culture</i>
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To be read in conjunction with	Strategy and Operational Plan Freedom to Speak Up Policy (HR06b)
This document can be made available in a range of alternative formats including various languages, large print and braille etc	
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Version Control:

		Version History:
Version 1	For consideration and approval at the Board of Directors Meeting on 28 November 2018 (Item B3a)	November 2018
Version 2	For consideration and approval at the Board of Directors Meeting in 25 March 2020 (Item D2)	March 2020

Use of Terminology:

Within this *Freedom to Speak Up Strategy and Vision* the following terminology is used:

- **FTSU** – Freedom to Speak Up

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SUPPORTING STATEMENTS - this document should be read in conjunction with the following statements:

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

All Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust employees have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults, including:

- being alert to the possibility of child / adult abuse and neglect through their observation of abuse, or by professional judgement made as a result of information gathered about the child / adult;
- knowing how to deal with a disclosure or allegation of child /adult abuse;
- undertaking training as appropriate for their role and keeping themselves updated;
- being aware of and following the local policies and procedures they need to follow if they have a child / adult concern;
- ensuring appropriate advice and support is accessed either from managers, *Safeguarding Ambassadors* or the trust's safeguarding team;
- participating in multi-agency working to safeguard the child or adult (if appropriate to your role);
- ensuring contemporaneous records are kept at all times and record keeping is in strict adherence to Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust policy and procedures and professional guidelines. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, will differ depending on the post you hold within the organisation;
- ensuring that all staff and their managers discuss and record any safeguarding issues that arise at each supervision session

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust recognises that some sections of society experience prejudice and discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 specifically recognises the *protected characteristics* of age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief (or lack thereof), sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and marital and civil partnership status. The Equality Act also requires regard to socio-economic factors.

The trust is committed to promoting and advancing equality and removing and reducing discrimination and harassment and fostering good relations between people that hold a protected characteristic and those that do not both in the provision of services and in our role as a major employer. The trust believes that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and is committed to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discriminatory practices.

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust also is aware of its legal duties under the Human Rights Act 1998. Section 6 of the Human Rights Act requires all public authorities to uphold and promote Human Rights in everything they do. It is unlawful for a public authority to perform any act which contravenes the Human Rights Act.

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust is committed to carrying out its functions and service delivery in line the with a Human Rights based approach and the FREDA principles of **F**airness, **R**espect, **E**quality **D**ignity, and **A**utonomy

PURPOSE

1. In 2015 Sir Robert Francis produced his *Freedom to Speak Up Review* which, amongst a range of recommendations and principles, called for all NHS organisations to appoint a Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian to improve the way each organisation deals with concerns raised by NHS staff as part of the process of fostering “a culture of safety and learning in which all staff feel safe to raise concerns”.
2. Guidance from NHS Improvement and the National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian’s Office has called for all NHS organisations to have a FTSU strategy and vision. This document outlines Mersey Care’s strategy and vision, however it should be *read in conjunction* with the trust’s *Freedom to Speak Up Policy*.

CORPORATE STRATEGY AND VALUES

3. This *Freedom to Speak Up Strategy* supports the delivery of the Trust’s corporate strategy and contributes to our vision. Mersey Care is striving to be an organisation that provides perfect care supported by a just and learning culture. We recognise we cannot improve **our services** without the active involvement of **our people** (staff, services users and carers)



4. As our just and learning culture places equal emphasis on accountability and learning, we recognise that in order to improve our services we need to learn from when care has gone well or not as expected. Where it has not gone well we need to understand *what was responsible* and not necessarily *who was responsible*. We need all staff to therefore engage in these learning activities, including speaking up when they believe we are not addressing issues they have concerns about.

5. We expect all staff to **consistently demonstrate the trust values** (Enthusiasm). However as part of their professional and other standards our expectation is that staff

- **take action and ownership to challenge inappropriate behaviour and address concerns**
- **speak up about concerns and / or compassionately address concerns**

and that our organisation and its leaders **create an environment where people feel safe to speak up and have the confidence that any concerns will be addressed.** (Accountability)

Mersey Care Values	
C ONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Committed to making improvements to our services for the benefit of all
A CCOUNTABILITY	Taking ownership to anticipate, develop and deliver high quality care
R ESPECT	How we treat others in an inclusive and supportive way
E NTHUSIASM	Demonstrate our passion and pride for what we do and how we do it
S UPPORT	Actively supporting others with compassion and courage

6. In considering this *Freedom to Speak Up Strategy*, the Board of Directors is mindful of the approach adopted by the Board in July 2014 when it approved the Raising Concerns at Work Policy (the forerunner to the FTSU Policy). Although recognising the importance of providing protection to staff who have whistleblown, the Board wanted to ensure it heard concerns about the Trust’s services no matter who or how they were raised with the Trust.

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP VISION AND STRATEGIC AIMS

7. Mersey Care's vision for freedom to speak up is that *one person can make a difference*.
8. With the help of our staff, volunteers, services users / carers and contractors, and in line with our values and our just and learning culture, we aim to:
 - **Speak Up** - provide an environment where anybody feels safe to raise concerns;
 - **Listen Up** - empower our leaders to be receptive to concerns raised and act on them promptly;
 - **Take Up** - share the learning from concerns raised to improve the quality of our services.
9. This work will be supported by the Board of Directors, our Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and our Just and Learning Ambassadors.

ACTION PLAN

10. To support the delivery of these strategy aims over the next 12 months we intend to:
 - review this Strategy within 12 months;
 - review our FTSU Policy (next review March 2012, to take into account the expected new policy from the National Guardian's Office (NGO));
 - continue to raise awareness amongst staff and leaders about how they can raise concerns (through our staff engagement processes and the work of both the FTSU Guardians and the Just and Learning Ambassadors);
 - provide bi-annual updates to the Board of Directors and the Audit Committee on the types of concerns that have been raised, the actions taken and the learning that has arisen;
 - ensure that learning from concerns raised is cascaded to staff, the Operational Management Groups throughout the year;
 - regularly monitor the delivery against the national FTSU self-review tool via the Audit Committee;
 - embed the FTSU Governance Group, comprising of the FTSU Guardians, a Staff Side representative, the Associate Director of Nursing, the Associate Director of Workforce and Divisional Representatives;
 - ensure that the FTSU Guardians continue to meet regularly with the Chair, the Chief Executive, the Lead Non Executive Director and the Lead Executive Directors.
11. Responsibility for delivery of these actions will rest with the Executive Director of Communications and Corporate Governance, who is the Lead Executive.